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PINK RIBBON RED RIBBON LAUNCHES WORK TO CURB DEATHS FROM CERVICAL CANCER IN ETHIOPIA

Partnership will strengthen health systems and train healthcare workers to deliver life-saving screening.

ADDIS ABABA, FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA (February 11, 2015) – Today, Secretary Margaret Spellings, President of the George W. Bush Presidential Center, together with Her Excellency Mrs. Roman Tesfaye, First Lady of Ethiopia, and His Excellency Dr. Keseteberhan Admasu, Federal Minister of Health, officially launched the work of Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon in Ethiopia at a ceremony at the Hilton Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian Government also announced its *National Strategic Action Plan for Non-Communicable Diseases*. In attendance were Her Excellency Mrs. Demitu Hambisa, Federal Minister of Science and Technology; Her Excellency Mrs. Zenbu Tadesse, Federal Minister of Women, Children and Youth Affairs; members of the diplomatic corps; other Government officials; and Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon partners from within and outside of Ethiopia.

[Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon](#) is a global health partnership founded by the [George W. Bush Institute](#), the U.S. Government through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Susan G. Komen®, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The partnership— which has helped screen over 100,000 women for cervical cancer in Botswana, Tanzania, and Zambia in the last three years— will build on existing healthcare programs in Ethiopia to add interventions to prevent, screen for, and treat cervical cancer. The disease continues to be the number-one cancer killer of women in sub-Saharan Africa, exacerbated by its connection with HIV. HIV-positive women are four-to-five times more likely to contract cervical cancer than their HIV-negative peers. Cervical cancer continues to be an urgent health issue in Ethiopia, where the disease is the second-most-common female cancer, comprising 16.5 percent of all cancer deaths in women.

“Ethiopia has taken a leadership role in prioritizing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and we are honored to be working with the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health and Regional governments to tackle cervical cancer, a disease that is affecting the women of this country in high proportions,” says Secretary Spellings. “We know from our work in other countries in sub-Saharan Africa that it is focus, leadership, and strong partnerships between the public and private sectors that are needed to tackle the disease successfully. Partnerships are an investment in strong healthcare systems and trained healthcare workers, and ultimately save women’s lives.”

Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon will adopt a regional approach in Ethiopia, with plans to roll out screening and basic treatment programs at thirty-three sites in the two Regions of Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNPR), and in Addis Ababa.

Support for Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon’s work in Ethiopia comes in the form of approximately US\$ 7.8 million in financial commitments over the next three years, as well as in-kind donations or assistance, from these organizations:

- **American Cancer Society (ACS)** is working with Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon partners to build capacity for planning, advocacy, and civil-society engagement on women’s cancer. The Society is supporting cancer registries to improve the data and knowledge about Ethiopia’s cancer burden, and will leverage its partnerships, including Cervical Cancer Action and the Taskforce on NCDs and Women’s Health, to raise awareness about the need to make women’s cancer a global priority. In 2014, ACS provided US\$ 45,000 to support awareness-raising and education around a demonstration program to vaccinate Ethiopian girls against the human papillomavirus (HPV), which causes cervical cancer, and US\$ 40,000 to support the Mathiws Wondu Ye-Ethiopia Cancer Society. In addition, the Society is providing in-kind support for cancer awareness, advocacy and research in the region.
- **The Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation** has committed US\$ 1.2 million over three years to support community-based activities and patient care and psychosocial interventions in Ethiopia as part of Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon. The Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation funding will support Cordaid, Doctors with Africa CUAMM, and the Mathiws Wondu Ye-Ethiopia Cancer Society. The Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation will also assign its *Secure the Future* Technical Assistance Faculty members to advise these organizations and strengthen capacity, as needed.

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- **Cordaid's U.S. Leaders Council** has committed to raise US\$ 600,000 over two years for Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon-supported programs in Ethiopia, recognizing the importance that intervention strategies to address cervical cancer will have on women and their families in the country. Cordaid, one of the largest development aid organizations in the Netherlands, has a deep partner network in Ethiopia, where its women's health work covers SNNPR, Oromia, Afar, and Somali. As part of Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon, Cordaid will support "Screen-and-Treat" sites for cervical pre-cancer in SNNPR and Addis Ababa in 2015, with expansion planned to Oromia in 2016.
- **General Electric (GE)** has made a commitment of US\$ 500,000 in Ethiopia to assist Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon. GE will provide advisory support and technical assistance to the Ethio-American Doctors Group in the planning, design, and development of a cancer center, and help train and equip Ethiopian biomedical technicians in the public sector in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Health to improve the quality of cancer diagnostics. In addition, GE will provide technical training and practical-skills development to ensure that equipment is optimized, and will help develop practical-skills labs so that local biomedical engineers and technicians can service and maintain biomedical equipment, including that used in the treatment of pre-cancerous cervical lesions.
- **GSK** has committed US\$ 2 million to help drive activities aimed at increasing awareness of cervical cancer in Ethiopia and expanding screening and treatment services. The grant is intended to support Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon's program objectives, which include assisting the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) to draft and publish a *National Cancer Strategy*; and expanding access to the screening for, and treatment of, cervical pre-cancer.
- **Grounds for Health**, an international non-profit organization dedicated to reducing cervical cancer among women in developing countries, will work as part of Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon to build ever-stronger partnerships with local health authorities, coffee cooperatives, employers, and others to strengthen and improve the coverage of screening and preventive therapy for cervical pre-cancer in the Sidama zone of SNNPR. Grounds for Health is also raising US\$ 200,000 from coffee companies by May 2015 to support these cervical-cancer prevention activities in Ethiopia.
- The **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**, through its Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy and Technical Cooperation Programme, will assist Ethiopia as part of Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon to build local capacity to fight breast and cervical cancer. With the goal of ensuring that women get timely access to diagnosis and treatment service, IAEA will support Ethiopia to expand the number of cancer centers in the country - bringing treatment closer to the population - and provide long-term training of cancer specialists. In doing so, IAEA will support the Ethiopian Government to consolidate existing radiotherapy and nuclear medicine services at the *Tikur Anbessa* (Black Lion) Specialized Hospital in Addis Ababa, and establish new centers for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer patients at university teaching hospitals in Gondar, Awassa, Jimma, Meke'le, and Hara. The estimated cost of IAEA support for the next two years is US\$ 2,264,000, with US\$ 192,000 provided by the Government of Ethiopia.
- **The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)** will contribute US\$ 1 million to Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon in Ethiopia, which will advance cervical cancer screening and treatment efforts built on the PEPFAR-supported HIV/AIDS service-delivery platform in Ethiopia. With this contribution, PEPFAR has fulfilled its initial commitment to invest a total of US\$ 10 million as part of Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon, an investment that is now spread across Botswana, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Zambia.

About Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon®

Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon® is the leading public-private partnership aimed at catalyzing the global community to reduce deaths from cervical and breast cancer in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America by raising awareness of these diseases and increasing access to quality services to detect and treat them. Its activities integrate prevention— including increased access to vaccination against HPV— screenings, and treatment into existing healthcare programs. Organizing members of the partnership include the George W. Bush Institute, PEPFAR, Susan G. Komen®, and UNAIDS. Corporate and foundation members include Becton, Dickinson and Company; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation; the Caris Foundation; GSK; IBM; Merck; and QIAGEN. More information is available at www.pinkribbonredribbon.org.

About the George W. Bush Institute

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